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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES: U.S. SANCTIONS AGAINST BURMA

REF: A. STATE 146862
[1](#)B. MANILA 3449
[1](#)C. MANILA 3443
[1](#)D. MANILA 3418 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Ambassador and staff continue to engage Philippine government and diplomatic colleagues on Burma, underscoring the need to maintain pressure on the regime and not let public attention be diverted from the urgent need for steps toward democratization by the junta. The UK and New Zealand ambassadors expressed to Ambassador their concern that the idea of Burma's expulsion from ASEAN appeared to garner little support among the organization's members. Meanwhile, a senior Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) official returned October 23 from high-level meetings in Burma, where the junta's foreign minister offered assurances that Burma remains committed to a continued evolution toward democracy. Poloff highlighted to Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) reftel points regarding new sanctions imposed October 19. Ambassador will have a private lunch with Foreign Secretary Romulo early next week to compare notes on Burma. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador spoke October 21 with UK and New Zealand ambassadors regarding the three nations' actions on Burma, including new financial sanctions by Australia. The UK and New Zealand envoys said that they have been working to keep ASEAN engaged, to include pressing for consideration of Burma's expulsion from the organization when ASEAN meets in November. Both ambassadors confided that they sensed little traction among ASEAN members for expelling Burma. The UK Assistant Secretary for Asia may travel to the region to speak with ASEAN members and others about Burma. The concern that public dismay was cooling in ASEAN over the Burmese junta's brutal crackdown was echoed in an October 25 working breakfast of senior officials from the UK, Australian, Japanese, New Zealand and Canadian embassies. The UK DCM said that the EU troika ambassadors - UK, French, EU - would deliver a demarche to Foreign Secretary Romulo October 25 outlining recent EU steps and calling on ASEAN to take a more proactive role. The Australian polcouns outlined his country's newly announced sanctions, while the Japanese DCM said that his mission was still awaiting further guidance from Tokyo.

[1](#)3. (C) Poloff conveyed reftel A points on Burma's role in the EU-ASEAN and other summits to Helen Barber, DFA Asia-Pacific Affairs Executive Secretary. Barber responded that the Philippine government has no intention of returning to a "business as usual" status quo with the Burmese, but intends instead to urge the regime to release detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other political

prisoners, and to "fast-track" the roadmap to democracy. She noted a lack of any consensus among ASEAN members regarding the expulsion of Burma, and indicated that even the Philippine government, among the most proactive in pressuring the Burmese junta, doubted the utility of such a measure. Ambassador has a private lunch with Foreign Secretary Romulo early next week to discuss Burma.

14. (C) Barber and DFA Undersecretary Enrique Manalo returned late October 23 from travel to Burma, during which they met with Foreign Minister Nyan Win and Deputy Foreign Minister Kyaw Thu in Naypyitaw (reftel B). The Burmese Foreign Minister told Barber that Burma was "resolutely committed" to the roadmap to democracy, and reminded that the regime had recently named a 54-member panel to begin drafting a new constitution, and that the junta's Deputy Labor Minister U Aung Kyi had been appointed as liaison to Aung San Suu Kyi. Minister Nyan Win went on to report that his government had repeated its invitation to UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari to visit Burma again as soon as possible.

KENNEY